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REINCARNATION

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GOOD DEEDS

All religions unite in praise of good deeds. Unselfish thoughts and acts for others make much positive karma for human beings. It is said that good deeds never die. The karmic return from them gives opportunity, and strength and longing to do more of them. The outbreathing of the love of all beings upon the world returns upon the one who chooses this mode of feeling a stream of radiant rose color.

But love for the world, philanthropy, does not suffice when one has passed the larval stage of broadside, indiscriminate action. The directing of feeling and thought must be definite and wisely discriminating. And merely philanthropic activity must be replaced by such wise direction of action as will be to all effort as the fulcrum to the lever of power.

There is a mysterious and complex plan that underlies Life. Its purpose is the ever upbuilding and perfecting of form and consciousness—*Ad Majoram Gloriam Dei!*

For a great period the evolution of genera and species was not recognized. Now much of its meaning is understood. But this phase of evolution is only the reflection of the evolution of consciousness that is going on parallel with it. All sentient beings are evolving. Even the plan and method of evolution are evolving!

Hence good thoughts and good deeds are to be considered wisely applied or invested only when they are directly and potently used in aid of some phase of the Great Evolving.

Yet wisely or unwisely applied, the good deeds of men never die. They reverberate forever!

W. V-H.



WHY DO RELIGIONS DECLINE?

In studying various ancient religions and philosophies and their influence upon their followers, one can not help wondering why it is that wisdom-teachings which were originally of sublime purity and truth could have, in the course of centuries and millennia, deteriorated and fallen away from the ancient ideals and traditions into a state of spiritual degeneracy and decay. Men acquire new knowledge of truth with such difficulty and pains that it would seem as if they would ever after treasure their acquisitions with the greatest zeal and care, adding rather to their splendor and glory than allowing them to become tarnished with error. Then again, if it be admitted, as it must be, that in general the fate of religions has been to decline with time, this is difficult to reconcile with the progress of humanity in its spiritual evolution, in which most men firmly believe.

To trace the causes of these degeneratings and obtain a full explanation, even in a single instance, would be most difficult, if not utterly impossible, because of the lack of sufficient accurate historical information. And such causes as could be discovered by ordinary methods of scholarly research would only deal with the outer changes that affected the fortunes of the religion, and not with the true causes which lie behind all these changes and are far more important and powerful.

But it is easily possible, for a student of the great laws of karma and reincarnation, which lie at the very root of human life and evolution, to point out several very general reasons for the decline of ancient religions from their original

state of purity and efficiency. These reasons are really guiding principles by means of which a fairly deep insight may be had into the meaning of religions in the spiritual evolution of humanity.

In the first place the purpose of a religion is to aid the larger masses of humanity to evolve, both morally and spiritually. The important question is not whether a religion is true or false, but whether it helps those who are its followers. It should help its adherents to maintain themselves firmly in an orderly mode of life and it should furnish them with such inspiration as will help them to make spiritual progress, that is, to unfold their inner latent divinity.

Secondly, religions are given to nations or to races in order that they may make especial progress along certain lines for which the race has more than ordinary capabilities. Every great religion thus has its keynote, or highest ideal, which appeals most strongly to its followers. In other words, man's spiritual progress does not only go on continuously and uniformly, but there is also quickened development in certain definite parts of man's being. These may be developed differently in different races.

Thirdly, men live in many different nations and races at different successive times; hence they will be trained in many different religions. Thus in their various incarnations they will get parts of the great Truth, which will at last make up a full and complete schooling in the Truth.

Fourthly, men can not be spiritually developed without considerable efforts on their own part. Men must work for such Truth as they wish to make their own; all a man is to gain, he must

earn, whether it is material or spiritual wealth. This means that men must themselves be given the responsibility of carrying on the maintenance of a pure system of religious teachings, after it has once been established by great efforts and sacrifices on the part of its founders. Naturally the inevitable result will be that the original teachings will lose in clearness and purity.

Fifthly, for a religion to be maintained in its full strength and spirituality, it is necessary that its leading teachers should be highly spiritual and able to act as living channels for the higher truths to be taught to the people. When at any time such high teachers are not found in the religion, there will be deterioration and decline.

Sixthly, as the successive generations of people of a religion pass away, their successors are likely to receive an ever-increasing inflow of the more undeveloped egos or human souls, who are coming into incarnation in order to get the training of that religion after it has been firmly established. If they make up a very large percentage of the followers of the religion, it will necessarily become more material and less effective in its power to inspire men to live the spiritual life.

Seventhly, it is in agreement with the general laws of growth of all organisms in nature and all organisations of humanity that a religion must grow from a small beginning up to its highest state and then decline gradually and finally disappear. The reason for this law of growth and decay seems to be that Life is evolving steadily and can not always express itself adequately through Form. After a life has gained such a training and experience as the form can allow it

to obtain, it will withdraw gradually or suddenly from the form, leaving it to its death or disintegration. The life, however, being spiritual energy, persists in higher worlds of being, and will again and again come into incarnation in the more material worlds, expressing itself through more and more perfect forms.

With the guiding truths of *karma* and reincarnation we can understand that religions must adapt themselves to the people who are to be taught, and they will necessarily decline when the egos who are born into the religions are more undeveloped and their personalities more selfish. It is never to be forgotten, however, that the true spirit of a religion does not decline, but only its outer life or expression. Religion is a part of the One Truth, which is ever perfect in essence, though its presentations in our world may be quite imperfect. Thus the expression of a religion among men may and does change with time and may even cease altogether, but only for a time. As men know religion in the world, it depends very much on the people who profess to follow its teachings, and therefore a religion must follow the fate of these nations.

It is only too true that prosperity is likely to bring about moral, mental and spiritual decay in a nation. The law of growth demands effort and exertion; prosperity allows nations to become inert, idle and slothful, and their spiritual natures will then inevitably suffer atrophy and degeneracy, at least in expression. Those who aspire to a fuller grasp of Truth must resolutely prepare themselves for battle, for constant struggle with the more material phases of their being. C. S.

REINCARNATION AMONG THE
AMERICAN INDIANS

Delving into the beliefs lying behind the rites and ceremonies which made up the outward expression of the various forms of religions among the North American aborigines, it is interesting to find that they not only had a rather clear conception of the worlds and forces subtler than the physical, but a crude understanding of reincarnation as well.

In one case a Sioux chief relates his experience in the world of spirits into which he has been allowed to wander for a short time in search of his sweetheart who has died. He describes the glorious sensation of gliding through the air, after leaving his physical body, amid scenes like those of earth but of a surpassing brightness, while he became greatly astonished that he seemed to pass through every object in his way with no personal inconvenience. His reluctance to leave so fair a world is overcome by friends whom he meets and who assure him that he still has work to be accomplished on earth, and until his time has come, he could be but an alien in the Spirit Land. This, together with other stories and myths of like nature, would seem to indicate that the American Indian was not as ignorant of the astral world and the laws governing it as are his successors on this continent.

Daniel G. Brinton, in his book entitled *Myths of a New World*, dealing with the symbolism and mythology of the red race of America, states that there was a wide-spread notion among the Iroquois and Algonquins that man had two souls,

one of a vegetative character which gives bodily life, and remains with the corpse after death until it is called upon to enter another body; another of more ethereal texture, which in life can depart from the body in sleep or trance and wander over the world, and at death goes directly to the Land of the Spirits.

The Sioux extended this idea to Plato's number, and are said to have looked forward to one soul going to a cold country, and the other to a warm and comfortable place. Some Dakota tribes shared their views in this, but more commonly, perhaps because of the sacredness of the number, imagined four souls with separate destinies: one to wander about the world, one to watch the body, the third to hover around the village, and the highest to go to the spirit land. Even this number is multiplied by certain Oregon tribes, who imagine one in every member, and by the Caribs of Martinique, who located a spirit wherever they could detect a pulsation, all these, however, being subordinate to a supreme one enthroned in the heart, and this one alone could be transported to the skies at death.

Where a plurality of souls was believed in, one of these soon after death entered another body to recommence life on earth. Acting under this conviction, the Algonquin women who desired to become mothers flocked to the couch of those who were about to die, hoping that the vital principle as it passed from the body would enter theirs. Among the Seminoles of Florida, when a mother died in child-birth, the infant was held over her face to receive her parting spirit and thus acquire strength and knowledge for its future use. Among

the Tahkalis the priest is accustomed to lay his hand on the head of the nearest relative of the deceased, and to blow into him the soul of the departed, which is supposed to come to life in his next child.

Probably, with reference to the current traditions that ascribe the origin of man to earth and likens his life to that of the plant, the Mexicans said that at one time all men have been stones, and that at last they would all return to stones, and, acting literally on this belief, they interred with the dead a small green stone which was called the principle of life.

It is not known whether any nations accepted the teaching of transmigration. La Hontan denies it positively of the Algonquins; but the natives of Popoyan refused to kill doves, according to Coreal, because they believed them to be inspired by the souls of the departed. Father Ignatius Chome relates that he heard a woman of the Chiriquanes in Buenos Ayres say of a fox: "May it not be the spirit of my dead daughter?" Before accepting this testimony as decisive we must first know if these people believed in a multiplicity of souls, and if these animals had a symbolical value; and if not, whether the soul was not simply presumed to put on this shape in its journey to the land of the hereafter, inquiries which are unanswered.

The doctrine of the resurrection was a deeply rooted conviction among the tribes of the eastern United States. It is connected with their highest theories of life and their burial ceremonies. The Moravian brethren give this with great clearness: "That they hold the soul to be immortal, and

think perhaps the body will rise again. They say: 'We Indians shall not forever die; even the grains of corn we put under the earth grow up and become living things.' *They conceive that when the soul has been awhile with God, it can, if it chooses, return to earth and be born again.* This is the highest typical creed of the aborigines. But instead of being born again in the ordinary sense, they thought the soul would return to the bones, that these would clothe themselves with flesh and that he would return to his tribe. This caused the custom of preserving the bones of the deceased.

This practice was almost universal. East of the Mississippi nearly every nation was accustomed at stated periods—usually once in eight or ten years—to collect and clean the osseous remains of those of its number who had died in the intervening time, and inter them all in one common sepulchre, lined with choice furs and marked with a mound of earth, wood and stone. A widow among the Tahkalis was obliged to carry the bones of her deceased husband wherever she went for four years. The Caribs of the mainland adopted the custom, and about a year after death the bones were cleaned, bleached and painted, wrapped in odorous balsams, placed in a wicker basket and kept suspended from the door of the dwelling. They were finally reverently placed in a secret cavern.

It is also certain that preservation of the corpse by a long and thorough process of exsiccation over a slow fire was nothing unusual, not only in Peru, Popoyan and the Carib countries, and Nicaragua, but among many of the tribes north

of the Gulf of Mexico. Underlying all these customs was the opinion that the soul or some part of it dwelt in the bones; that these were the seeds which, planted in the earth or preserved safely and unbroken, would in time put on fleshly garb again and germinate into living beings. The Hebrew rabbis taught that in the bone called the coccyx remained at death the germ of a second life, which, at the proper time, would develop into the purified body as the plant from the seed.

Even the lower animals were supposed to follow the same law. Hardly any of the hunting tribes permitted the bones of slain game to be broken. They were collected in heaps and thrown into the water. The Yurucares of Bolivia even put carefully away the fish bones, saying that unless this was done the fish and game would disappear from the country.

The ensuing life was not expected to be any better or worse than the one previous, seeming to indicate that any knowledge as to a Law of Causation was entirely undeveloped, they having been able to grasp but a part of the truth.

Dyna Govan.

IN THE GARDEN HOUSE

Evening Seventeenth

Inquirer: The great war must be a huge means for the outworking of ancient karma. But is it not also true that much new karma is generated by the nations and individuals involved?

Student: Yes, that is only too true. But it is important to know that the new karma which is being formed is not so much due to the physical actions which actually occur in the war than to the spirit in which men take part in them. For instance, horrible things will necessarily occur in warfare: they may sometimes be wholly unavoidable, thus indicating that they are largely results of old karma. But the men who take part in such actions usually take a definite attitude toward them, and on the nature and quality of this attitude depends the new karma which must be balanced or outworked in the future. Different men may do some necessary action with widely different feelings and motives. If they act from a sense of duty and do not throw their personality into the action, then they make little or no karma which will react upon them in painful ways in the future.

Inq.: Just what do you mean by a man throwing his personality into the action,?

St.: Every man lives in all the different parts or phases of his being; that is, he has feelings and emotions and thoughts, both personal and universal. He may, however, live more in one phase than in another. He may concentrate himself and his consciousness more in one of his bodies than in another. If he throws his person-

ality into the action, it means that he lives, for the time of the action, chiefly in the personality or his lower self. He will then have personal feelings and thoughts about the action, and thus link himself karmically with the action. That is to say, since he regards himself as a personality or separated self, with respect to the action, the karma of the action, or its outworking and balancing in the future, must also affect his personality then.

Inq.: The karma which he thus generates would not necessarily be bad or painful, would it?

St.: Oh no; it might be quite the opposite. It is when the man acts with bad motives, when he is guided by impulses of evil passions, such as anger or hate, that the karma would be very undesirable. Karma brings both pleasure and pain: it is utterly impartial. It is the man himself who makes his karma helpful or hindering.

Inq.: Why is it that it is so very important how the man regards himself in his actions?

St. Man acts according to his thoughts; or, in other words, a man's thoughts determine the mode of his action. If he thinks himself to be a separate personality and acts according to his selfish desires then the subtler energies used in the action will be intensified and colored by his personal self and the reaction will therefore affect this personal self also. But if he regards himself as doing his work as a matter of duty, as something which ought to be done, without regarding his personality as anything more than a machine which is to do the work, then he becomes an impartial agent of the law of karma, and does not make any new karma.

This important point may well be illustrated by the case of the soldiers who are detailed as a firing squad to execute a condemned spy. They may do it without any personal feelings, in almost as mechanical a manner as if it were done by a machine; or they may feel very revengeful and bitter toward the man, and there may be different degrees of this feeling. They may be very patriotic and feel that their country's wrongs ought to be revenged, without regarding themselves as having any personal interests in the whole affair. In this case they would simply help to strengthen the karmic link between their nation and that of the spy, in the outworking of which they and the spy would all figure in some future lives, again acting as representatives of their respective nations. Or, the soldiers may hold a deep feeling of personal satisfaction in executing the spy,—in this case they have probably some old personal karma to work out with the spy, and will have more in the future.

If, on the other hand, they carry out their orders as a matter of duty, without personal feelings whatever, this shows that they are probably balancing old accounts of karma with the spy, without making any new karma. Such an attitude of personal neutrality is by far the most favorable for human evolution, though it is also most difficult for most persons, showing that they are still ruled by passions rather than able to rule their passions. There is no greater ideal for men to strive to attain than the power to act impersonally. To be able to do this means that men must have rid themselves to a considerable extent of their own past karma, and only those

who are freed from their karma are really free to take an active part in helping to forward the evolution of the world directly.

Inq.: Is it possible that the soldiers can have feelings with regard to the spy, which are not personal, and if so, what would they result in?

St.: The fact that the soldiers have been given the task of executing the spy indicates that it is likely that they have some old accounts to square up. But it is quite possible that they may control their own personal feelings and act impersonally, without taking pleasure in their task. In this case they are winning a great victory, self-control, the first necessary power in the work of living above karma. You remember the saying of the ancient Chinese philosopher that the man who takes a city is called a conqueror, but the man who conquers himself is much greater.

Inq.: Then the true victories are not the ones which the world can see and applaud.

St.: And it is well that it is so. If men could see the real victories which are won in the self-training of a man, their admiration and praise would only tend to draw him back into his personal consciousness and make it more difficult for him to go on in this self-training.

C. S.

“That night I awoke hearing a voice speaking above me and saying, ‘No human soul is like any other human soul, and therefore the love of God for any human soul is infinite, for no other soul can satisfy the same need in God.’”

W. B. Yeats.

A QUARREL ARBITRATED

"Please, could youse come downstairs a minute? Me an' Johnny has been fightin' about sumpin' an' we want youse to settle it." The one addressed looked up from her desk a bit startled by the little apparition in white who had so noiselessly appeared at her open doorway.

It was at "the witching hour of midnight"—the blessed time of quiet, which, stealing gently over the great city, had pervaded even the region down by the river and the gas tanks.

The unexpected visitor was one of two twelve-year-old boys who had been persuaded to come in from their chosen sleeping place in an empty wagon in the near-by alley to occupy an improvised bunk on the floor of the settlement house office. They had slept out of doors all through the summer, but now that the weather was growing cold, the lure of a hot bath every night and "real for sure pajamas like de rich guys wear when dey sleep" had prevailed. During the first few nights in their new environment they had been remarkably quiet and subdued, but it was with a sinking heart that the chosen referee descended the stairway.

Great was her bewilderment to find Johnny before the open fire-place, his rosary in his hand, busily saying his prayers—a little kneeling white-clad figure in the glow of the firelight, for all the world like a small Sir Galahad in solemn preparation for a knightly errand.

But as she approached, she heard these astonishing words uttered in wrathful, vigorous accents: "Hail Mary, full of grace, de Lord is wid

dee; blissèd Tom went a-swimmin'—." "There he goes agin," interrupted his exasperated companion; "'Taint right, an' he says 'tis, an' he keeps sayin' it jest to *devil* me."

Sitting down before the open fire with a very angry small boy on either side of her, the referee explained as tactfully as she knew how, that although there certainly had been a "blessèd Tom," sometimes called "doubting Thomas," whom the Lord Jesus had loved very much—and no doubt this same Thomas had gone swimming many times when he was a little boy—still it was not quite the right thing to speak about him in the "Hail Mary" prayer. Johnny had certainly misunderstood the words when hearing them uttered in rapid repetition, which were: "blessèd art thou among women," not "blessèd Tom went a-swimmin'."

After many questions and much parleying, the decision was accepted, the prayer was once more repeated very slowly and carefully, two heads rested upon their pillows and two queer little theologians were at peace with one another.

But as she was about to depart, she again heard her name called—this time very faintly. It was a muffled, timorous voice that spoke: "We tink maybe youse wouldn't mind a kissin' us good-night." As she knelt by the side of the bed and brushed back the hair from each little forehead that she might kiss it, her soul went out in greater appreciation and understanding to the spirit of her who had been deemed worthy to become the mother of the Master. Surely such a mother's spirit must wish to come very close to every child who calls upon her.

And when at length the chosen referee began to climb the stairs to her room, she seemed to hear again the words of the "angelical salutation," as it is repeated nightly by the millions of little girls and boys who have been taken under the protection of that church, whose keys ever remain in the safe keeping of the good Saint Peter:

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessèd art thou among women and blessèd is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Alice Holt Guagliata.

[Those who framed this prayer doubtless knew of the desirability of purity, aspiration and some spiritual aid at the time of the forthgoing! *Ed.*]



THE BATTLES OF THE WORLDS

Do I fight in the battles of the world, with sword and pistol? I do not; for I am a woman.

Do I fight in the battles of the worlds, with heart, head and soul? I do; for I am a human being.

I fight with these three: heart, head and soul.

I take part in the warfare of the worlds, for my hero shall help win these battles, for the good of each and all.

Ella L. Cutler.

FROM A LETTER. (III)

While you may be discouraged at the lack of success in your trying to rise above the karmic difficulties of the personality, you should never allow yourself to get discouraged on that account. Sometimes we are forced even to the very ground by our karma, but we are never overcome until we ourselves give up the struggle and submit. Our karma is of our own making, but we ourselves, in our inmost being, are divine, or fragments of Divinity, as yet undeveloped. And all the efforts we put forth in order to gain the mastery of matter are worth while. All will help us to reach our final goal.

There are a few statements in your letter that show a dangerous point of view towards karma, the Good Law, and which must be explained and corrected. You say, "I have about come to the conclusion that I can neither help myself, nor be helped by God or man. If everything is karmic, it is probably my karma to feel, and do, and be what I am."

Now, there are two aspects of karma, and they are equally necessary to be recognised. One is the karma which is already formed, or has already been generated in the past. This can not be set aside, but its outworking may be somewhat modified by our way of reacting to it. The other part is the karma which we are making in the present moment, all along. That is entirely within our own control. The outer things may drive us along a certain course against our will, but the way we react in our inner nature is left in our own power. One may suffer for a whole

life-time, but if one does not allow bitterness to overwhelm the personality wholly, then one may be continually redeeming his own past, without generating evil consequences for the future. It is only when we throw ill will and resentment against our karma, that we poison our own nature and bring about difficulties for ourselves for the future. If we regard ourselves as helpless under the pressure of karma, we make a very great mistake. There is nothing inevitable about the actual karma which will come upon us. The only karma which is inevitable and beyond our control is that which has been endured and has thereby exhausted itself and can no longer harm us. We must regard our old but unexhausted karma as so much force or energy which *tends* to produce certain results in our consciousness. But we may oppose our own will and refuse to allow our consciousness to be thus dominated from without. This does not mean that we are to throw all our energies into the lower bodies of the personality and try to do what may be impossible. It does mean that while we exert ourself in our whole being, we maintain control of our inner consciousness, and even if all goes hopelessly wrong outside, maintain that all is well within, that our inmost self is *not* affected or vanquished. You may, if you like, call this Christian Science: the name does not matter, so long as it is a most wonderful truth that man can actually assert his own divine birthright and know that his inmost consciousness is in very fact above the reach of the forces and energies of karma.

You say that the history of the past has repeated itself over and over and over again. Are you

quite sure that you have not yourself kept up the rolling of the karmic wheel? Did you not perhaps throw out from yourself the very energies which later on fell back on you with great force? Our past karma may be very bad and difficult, but we must never forget that it is a limited quantity, and that it will decrease constantly as time goes on, provided only that we do not replenish its store from that fund of energy which is ours daily to dispose of as we decide.

We do have the right to resist our karma with all our powers; we must resist it bravely. But whether we win out or suffer pain is not of great importance in our larger evolution. What is of importance is that *we must never deny our own divinity, in fact or by a mistaken attitude*. If we say that we are weak and helpless and that karma has us wholly in its grip, and that it is of no use to continue making efforts to reach freedom from our "fate,"—why, then we make that, for the time being, an actual condition. We thus seal our own fate. But if we struggle on with all our energy, never acknowledging defeat or helplessness, no matter how badly we may fail from the world's point of view,—why, then we are in very truth victorious all that time. After a limited number of years, or even less, after having suffered a limited amount of pain, the old karma will be outworn and exhausted. Then the long and difficult struggle will only be a memory, while the victory gained will be a fact and truth for all the future ages.

To deny one's own inner divine being is really to commit the "unpardonable sin." Even this must not be understood in the theological sense,

but rather in the sense that we ourselves must save ourselves, and as long as we deny our own immortal spirit we are forcibly preventing our own progress. Other sins, results of our ignorance, may make life painful for us, but all the while we are still capable of making progress.

We do not want to deny our own imperfection and the existence of Evil. But we must try to realise the truth that we are constantly evolving from imperfection toward perfection, and we must regard our "sins" not as being illusions, but as having only relative reality, and as being nothing more or less than mistakes due to ignorance. By means of such mistakes we learn the way to perfect freedom, when the Good Law is learned in all its workings and loved for its wonderful beauty and power, which distils nectar for the gods even out of the poisonous flowers of man's lower passions.

There is something in "letting yourself alone," that is, when you are in great difficulty do not aggravate conditions. Hold as much as possible of your real self above the suffering personality. Again, this does not mean that you are to deny the suffering in the personality but that you are to assert with great force that your Ego (the real *you*) is not suffering.

The good and sufficient logical reasons for bitterness and resentment in the face of unjust suffering exist only in the world of the personality. You do not have to deny those reasons. What is desirable is that you should try to realise that karma is not arbitrary or unjust, but is only bringing you the harvest of your own past sowing. And so, while we may wisely oppose the Law in

the world of the personality by manful effort, in our real self, the Ego, we may and should resign ourselves utterly to it, just as the punished child may still love and trust its parents. It is just by actually making a practice of this, that we can come to know the truth of the law of karma, its wonderful impartiality and its absolute necessity for our own growth toward human perfection in evolution.

It is very, very essential that we shall learn the necessity and the rightness of "minding our own business." As long as we are induced to throw the blame for any conditions on some other personalities, we are simply refusing the gracious opportunity that the Good Law gives us of learning some necessary lesson, perhaps some very important one. If we let other people have their opportunities for making mistakes, they will in good time learn the Law. It is not for us to say that they must learn it in this present life-time.

Sometimes our relations to other personalities do require our exerting restraining influences on them. But these occasions are not frequent. They are almost wholly confined to relations such as that of parent to child, teacher to pupil, etc. We must try to recognise and realise that other Egos must have reasonable freedom to act and gain experience and deal with their own karma without interference. Forcible restraint can never make men virtuous; it may be imposed on personalities but the undeveloped Egos must then simply have other incarnations in which to make mistakes in the personality. We do not blame the young pupil for making errors in his arithmetic; all we want is that he shall learn to figure correctly.

Of course, you may and will do just as you yourself decide in such matters, and no one has the right to try to influence you to follow any particular course. No one can say that you were not and are not the instrument of karma in your relations to others. On the contrary you *are* the instrument of karma; but it is highly desirable for every one to be an unconscious agent of karma. And it is a very different matter whether we work with the energies which belong to the constructive, or love, side of nature, or with the destructive, or hate, side. If we use the love energies wisely, we will not have painful reactions to come back upon ourselves. But if we use the hate energies, we are almost sure to bring "bad karma" upon ourselves, for we have not yet reached the perfect wisdom of the Master who could say, "I come not to bring peace to the world, but the sword." As long as we are little children in the school of Life we will do well to use harmless playthings; when we are grown up we may use the things which can destroy.

There should be no desire on anyone's part to make light of your difficulties. Nor would any true and wise person blame you for not being able to live more impersonally, or more according to your own highest ideals. But though we are not expected to do "the impossible," yet we can make no mistake in trying to do "the impossible," if it is something to which we aspire. By and by, what is now impossible will become the possible, and then an actual fact.

There is nothing impractical in applying the knowledge of the Good Law to our everyday life.

It can be done, even if it is difficult and takes much time and effort. We need not put forth this effort unless we have confidence in the Good Law. But if we put forth the effort we will put ourselves in line to justify to ourselves the truth of the Good Law and the very great good fortune which brought us to a knowledge of It.

There are some things which are very difficult to do, yet they are very important and will help us, if we try to do them: Never allow yourself to become discouraged. See your own difficulties as another would see them,—impersonally. Trust in the Good Law. Use the love energies, if you can wisely do so; if not, maintain “neutrality”; but never use the hate energies until you have achieved perfection. Maintain the attitude in your inmost being that *All is well*, no matter what seems to be the fact outside you.

While we are trying our best to rid ourselves of some old habits or faults, which we perhaps found useful and helpful once upon a time, but have now recognised to be obstacles to our further spiritual progress, we may well remember the splendid words of *Light on the Path* which tells us to “wait with the patience of confidence for the hour when they shall affect you no longer.” Our “deliverance from evil” is a certainty, if we take up the proper attitude toward it: that of a determination to change it to good; for we ourselves must be the agents of deliverance.

X.

A VISION OF THE NIGHT

I stepped out of the door of my house one night and I saw many people in the streets—scores and hundreds of dark, moving figures, talking and murmuring, as if afraid. And all the people seemed to be looking up at the Heavens and pointing to something which they had just discovered there. When I too looked up, I saw that the earth was enclosed in what seemed to be a huge hollow globe of white clouds and my part of the earth was as if a great alabaster bowl had been inverted over my head. But in the same moment I saw that the globe was not made of clouds, nor of alabaster, but of ice. And the ice was very solid and thick, and the earth seemed suddenly to be growing dark and cold. And a voice within me said: “For centuries this crust of ice has been forming around the earth, and the people saw it not. It is in this fashion that the moon hath died and so mayhap the earth must die.”

Then my heart was filled with grief that the lovely green earth, with its blooming flowers, shrubs and trees, its beautiful, innocent childhood, its fair, pure womanhood, its sturdy, honest manhood, should thus perish.

But even as I continued to gaze upward, I heard a mighty crashing sound, as if a thousand meteors had been hurled against the enclosing ice, and many people fell to the ground. And when I again looked up, I saw a gigantic opening which had been made, and beyond the broken, jagged edges of the ice—tens and hundreds of miles in thickness—appeared the beautiful blue sky, bluer

than I had ever seen it; and many glowing stars were there.

It was then that I knew that a mighty army had been sent to save the earth by a great deliverance. *And this had come to pass even at the time when the people had first discovered that they were in peril.*

Alice Holt Guagliata.



FIELD NOTES

The following clippings of notes from England are taken from the June number of *The Vahan*:

During April and May courses of lectures on *Reincarnation*, *Karma* and the *Life After Death* have been given in fifty-eight different places in public halls, lodge rooms or drawing rooms. In several places quite a large number of soldiers were present, who showed their interest, not only by their questions and applause but by attending the subsequent lectures. Thousands of leaflets were distributed amongst the different places, and in several localities a meditation meeting was held to help the work.

Press Work.—During the months that Capt. Powell took over the charge of the Press Work he initiated several useful activities, chief amongst them being a Bibliography of 253 references in various books and plays to Reincarnation, and 83 to Karma, which should prove valuable to lecturers and students of this great teaching.

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The *Legion* has two members in Denmark. Mr. August E. Plum, Aaboulevard 17. II, Kobenhavn V., Denmark, will be glad to receive applications and subscriptions, as well as to give information about the work.

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The following clipping is from a South African paper:

A lecture upon "Reincarnation" from the standpoint of the Vedic religion was given on Friday last, under the auspices of the Durban branch of the Reincarnation Society (the *Legion*); the lecturer being Mr. Thugavelu. There was a large attendance, including both Indians and Europeans, among whom were many ladies. The speaker was followed with close attention as he concisely set forth the idea of reincarnation as the method of growth from the primitive stages of consciousness to the realisation of identity with the Supreme consciousness, when Mukti or liberation was attained; the process going on in accordance with the law of Karma, or action and reaction, whereby the individual progresses; his thoughts and actions in one life producing his limitations or his environment in the next.

At the close of the lecture many questions were put concerning a variety of topics, most of which were answered to the satisfaction of the inquirers, the principal point being the absence in memory of previous lives, or any previous existences; in regard to which it was explained that in every incarnation there was a new physical vehicle, including an entirely new brain, the cells of which had no impressions from previous experiences in a life when it was not in existence and therefore could not reproduce them, and it was not until the individual consciousness had been brought by evolution into touch with the higher consciousness of the Ego, in which all the experiences of every life were stored, that the memory of previous lives could be obtained through the physical brain and made part of the waking consciousness in physical life.

The next lecture, entitled "Reincarnation from the Theosophical Standpoint," will be delivered by Mr. H. J. S. Bell, at the lodge-room, Acutt's Arcade, upstairs, over tea-room, at 8 p. m., on May 21-st.

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The Group recently formed in Detroit, Mich., has given two *Legion* stereopticon lectures, which proved successful.

CLEVELAND GROUP

Meetings have been held the first and third Saturdays of each month, with one exception, when the room was needed for a supper. The attendance has varied but the Leader has been most loyally supported by the secretary and others. Strangers have been present at almost every meeting.

The first three weeks "Karma" was presented in a general manner. Then "Early Death" proved an interesting subject for two weeks. A number of weeks was spent upon the study of the "Group Soul" and our duty to our younger brothers, the animal life. After this was considered "National Karma" generally and as applied to the problems of the war. Then were studied the wars of America, one by one, and it was attempted to understand the effects as well as the karmic causes that had led up to them. America of to-day was considered in relation to labor and capital and to white slavery.

Many interesting and original ideas were brought out in the study hour, even though the work had to be of necessity somewhat superficial.

Considerable literature was distributed personally and a rack was kept supplied with pamphlets.

A number of times it was noted that subjects which were discussed in the class in one month were treated in *Reincarnation* the following month. Surely there is communion of thought in the mental world.

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A new supply of *Legion* Emblems has been secured, and it is strongly recommended that every earnest member wear one regularly. Prices: for pin with safety catch, fifty cents; for pendant, twenty-five cents.

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Our staunch members in Holland and Java have been very active and are already planning new work to be done when the European war comes to an end. A group at Batavia, Java, is now being chartered, and applications for charters for five active groups in Holland have been sent to the Dutch Representative of the *Legion*.

COLLECTION OF LEGION MATERIAL

Many of the members of the *Legion* who are desirous of helping on its activities and its usefulness may be of great service in the work of collecting literary material, such as bits of information, quotations and references to karma and reincarnation in general literature. It is highly desirable that this work should be done and that the results should be filed and kept on hand for the use of members in writing articles, preparing lectures and teaching classes. There is hardly a member who does not find in his reading some interesting material which could be made use of for the cause of spreading the knowledge of karma and reincarnation.

The method of carrying on this work, year by year, is quite simple. Let each member who wishes to help, provide himself with a note-book and a scrap-book. If you find some reference to karma or reincarnation in any book of general literature, make a note of the book and its author, the publisher, and the page of reference. Short references may be carefully copied in the note-book; longer ones may be merely indicated, or they may be copied on separate sheets of paper and placed loosely in the scrap-book. Clippings should be taken from newspapers of anything dealing with karma or reincarnation, even the jokes, and fastened loosely in the scrap-book. Save also any clippings which treat of something which is of interest in the study of the two truths or of the evolution of life. Newspaper notices of child-prodigies, of men of genius, of strange experiences in memory or dream, of cases of multiple personality, of interesting facts of heredity, etc., should be promptly cut out and placed in the scrap-book. From time to time the material may be sent in to the Headquarters of the *Legion*.

It is particularly desirable to gather the following material relating to the Christian religion: exact references to karma and reincarnation or pre-existence of souls, found in the Christian Scriptures, the books of the Apocrypha, and the writings of the early Church Fathers; also what Christian preachers and writers on theology have believed, or do believe, in either karma or reincarnation or pre-existence.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Life of Edward Bulwer, First Lord Lytton. In two volumes, 563, 575 pp. MacMillan & Co., Limited.

A life of the great author, Lord Lytton, by one of his descendants has appeared recently from the press of MacMillan & Co., of London.

The life was notable even as seen in the ordinary way. From an inner point of view its magnitude was infinitely more majestic.

To those who are interested in the subjects of karma and reincarnation the story of *Zanoni* and that of *The Coming Race* are of especial value.

The first of these stories, *Zanoni*, deals in more or less veiled terms with the doings of an occultist who, living in Italy and the Mediterranean Islands, performs many wondrous deeds that go far to convince the reader of the actuality of occultism although they are not presented in consistent form throughout.

The novel *The Coming Race* tells the story of a people supplied with a force called *vril*, which enables the possessor to accomplish things in common activity wholly impossible without its use.

Many will remember that a force of this kind was in the hands of the inhabitants of the sunken continent of Atlantis. The people who possessed that force made use of it for many purposes, among others that of driving air-ships. It was of so condensed a character that a very small receptacle enabled those who possessed the force to propel air-ships without adding much to their weight.

The prime superficial characteristic of Lord Lytton's work as a novelist lay in a sparkling brilliancy which attracted and interested people by tens of thousands in his generation. Hence his service, although veiled, was extremely far reaching as well as potent.

All honor to this great man, illustrious, illuminate!

W. V-H.

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Representative for Dutch Speaking Countries:

Mrs. Louise van der Hell, Adyar, Madras S., India.

Representative for South Africa:

Mr. G. Williams, 17, Acutt's Arcade, Durban, So. Africa.